

4.
Fear God : Honour the King.

A

DISCOURSE

On M A T T. xxii. 21.

PREACHED IN THE

Methodist Chapel, B A T H,

On SUNDAY, JANUARY 19th, 1794.

By HENRY MOORE.



L O N D O N :

Printed by G. PARAMORE, North-Green, Worship-Street,
Sold by G. WHITFIELD, at the Chapel, City-Road ;
and at the Methodist Preaching-Houses in Town and
Country. 1794.

[Price TWO-PENCE.]

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THIS Sermon was preached in the usual line of ministerial duty, without any design of publication. It is now printed at the repeated and earnest desire of the Congregation,

We have carefully read the following Sermon in Manuscript, previous to its publication; and do highly approve of it. We believe it to be perfectly agreeable to the sentiments of the Body of Methodists, and do cordially recommend it to the serious perusal of all our People.

Bristol,
Feb. 13, 1794.

THOMAS COKE,
SAMUEL BRADBURN.

This Sermon has also met with the approbation of the Book-Committee.

A DISCOURSE.

M A T T. xxii. 21.

Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto GOD, the things that are GOD's.

IT was foretold by *Isaiah*, several hundred years before our Lord appeared in the flesh, that he should be despised and rejected of men. There were several reasons for this. 1. He was a poor man. Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. This was contrary to the expectation of the Jews. They looked for their Messiah to appear with external pomp and power. But when they saw him, they hid as it were their faces from him, and cried, Is not this the Carpenter's Son? He who had not where to lay his head was of small account with those who were covetous, and proud of worldly distinctions.

2. This contempt was greatly heightened when this poor man asserted his proper
A 2 character.

character. When they heard him say, I am the Resurrection and the Life : If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins ; they were filled with indignation, and cried out, he hath a Devil and is mad, why hear ye him ?

3. The authority also with which he taught, and the severity with which he exposed the Hypocrisy of their most admired characters, strengthened the Enmity against him. Hence it was determined, in their council, that whosoever acknowledged him, should be put out of the Synagogue

It could not be, but that he who was thus hated of the world, because he testified of it that its deeds were evil, should have all manner of evil spoken of him, and be numbered with the transgressors both in life and death.

But his enemies were not satisfied with striving to make void his teaching by wresting his words, and charging his most divine actions with sin, they took counsel, we are told in this passage, how they might entangle him in his talk. In order to this, as St. Luke informs us, ch. xx. 20, they sent

sent forth spies, feigning themselves to be just men, (men of a tender scrupulous conscience,) to question him concerning submission to the Civil Power, that, as the same Evangelist observes, they might deliver him to the power and authority of the Governor.

It was no doubt matter of surprise to all the people, that our Lord had been silent upon every question of this kind. The nation at large looked out for a Deliverer from the Roman yoke. Even his own Disciples expected a temporal kingdom, and that he should be, in that sense, placed upon the Throne of David. This was thought to be expressly asserted in the ancient Prophecies. This general expectation had so awakened the jealousy of Herod, that upon the report of the Wise Men, respecting the birth of the Messiah, he sent forth his soldiers, and barbarously murdered all the infants in the confines of *Bethlehem*, hoping to destroy him among them, whose star had appeared in the east, and who was born King of the Jews.

But truth is always consistent with itself. His kingdom is not of this world; and hence he not only abstained from all in-

terference with the Civil Government, but from any expression concerning it. It is true, as God over all, blessed for ever, his kingdom is universal : and this the world shall know, when his enemies shall be made his footstool. Of his kingdom in this respect, it is not for us to know the times and the seasons. But we know that he was manifest in the flesh to take away our sins, and to purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, and holy as he who called them is holy : a people that should render to all their due ; and by well-doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

His enemies, however, were resolved that he should speak on this subject ; and they chose for this purpose some of their own disciples, and associated with them the Herodians. How strange is this ! No contraries held more antipathy than those who were thus united in this attempt. The Pharisees hated the Roman Government, as having broken the Sceptre of Judah, and introduced the heathen into the inheritance of the Lord. Hence their aversion to the Publicans, who were the Tax-gather-
ers

ers appointed by that Power, and who who were looked upon as the badges of the slavery of Israel. The Herodians, on the contrary were courtiers, peculiarly attached to Herod, and consequently zealous for the interest of the Roman Government, which was the main support of his family. But these implacable enemies to each other, united together against an excellence which condemned the vices of both, without ministering to the views of either party.

These wolves now came to him in sheep's cloathing. Master, said they, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth ; neither carest thou for any man : for thou regardest not the person of men. (What a testimony ! so the Devil can speak truth for his own purpose.) Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou ? Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not ? Here was a master-piece of the wisdom from beneath ! How shall he extricate himself from this dilemma ? If he said yes, the Pharisees would have accused him to the people, as a betrayer of the liberties of his country, and an ene-

my to the expected kingdom of the Messiah. If he said no, the Herodians would have accused him to the Roman Governor.

But Jesus knowing their wickedness, said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? shew me the tribute money. And they brought to him a penny, (a Denarius, a Roman silver coin, about seven-pence halfpenny in value.) He saith to them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say to him, Cæsar's: plainly acknowledging, by their having received his coin, that they were under his Government. (And this is a standing rule. The current coin of every nation shews in whom the Government is vested.) Render therefore, says our Lord, to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God, the things that are God's. And hearing it, they marvelled, at the wisdom of his answer, and that he should thus escape out of their hands. And they left him, and went their way. And thus to all who learn of him, he will give a mouth and wisdom, that all their adversaries shall not be able to gain-say or resist.

One is our master, even Christ. He says, learn of me ; and the eternal Father declares, this is my beloved Son ; hear ye him. It is only thus that we can avoid those snares which the God of this world lays in the path of those who are enemies to his kingdom. Men of the world, who fear not God, will always act as passion, appetite, or pride excite them. The things that are God's are of no moment with them. Every consideration gives place to the ignorant, or interested clamour of the day : and God must be worshipped or obeyed, as comports with their ideas of worldly prosperity. On the other hand, it must be confessed that many who have known God, have not in this respect kept themselves pure. Many of them have given place to that notion, that dominion was founded in grace, and on this account they have acted as though the kingdoms of the world, were already made the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ, and that he was come to reign before his ancients gloriously !

The Histories of the world, and of the Church, have given us melancholy exam-

ples of those who have erred in these points, on the right hand, and on the left. What then shall those do who would avoid both extremes, and keep a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards men? Let them learn of their divine Master this two-fold duty; To render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's. Let us calmly consider these two precepts.

I. At the time when our Lord spoke these words, the sceptre, according to the prophecy of Jacob, had departed from Judah, and Tiberius Cæsar governed the Jews, by Herod a tributary King, and Pontius Pilate a Roman Officer. Cæsar was the common name of the Roman Emperors, as Pharaoh had been of the Kings of Egypt. By Cæsar therefore we may understand our Lord to mean, when speaking to all his people, the supreme Civil Power in any nation of the world. This differs in various places according to the providence of God, who has disposed it in such an order as shall be best for the people, for whose sake he has established magistracy

magistracy in its various forms. Our Lord's command therefore to all his followers is, First, that they should reverence this Power, which the present state of the world so greatly needs ; and, Secondly, that they should contribute chearfully towards its support.

How this command was enforced and obeyed, in the earliest and purest ages of the Church, we learn from the New Testament. The first ministers of Christ were shining examples of this duty. It was said of them, that they turned the world upside down ; so great was the power which accompanied their word, and so different were the right ways of the Lord which they taught and enforced, from the wisdom and ways of this world. But did those men who approved themselves the ministers of God by signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

“ Who spake the dead alive, and living dead !” Did they interfere with the Civil Government in any nation ? Certainly had it been the will of their divine Master, the powers of the world had all been humbled at their feet. That scripture would have

been fulfilled to them, one of you shall chase a thousand, and two of you shall put ten thousand to flight. But their commission did not extend thus far. Their ministry was a ministry of Reconciliation. They proclaimed a suffering Messiah, who was bruised for our iniquities, and who bore the punishment due to our sins in his own body upon the tree. And when they were persecuted by the civil government, the same mind was found in them which was also in Christ Jesus : for their Master's sake they were content to be killed all the day long, and counted as sheep for the slaughter.

And how did they teach those who received their word. Herein we have line upon line and precept upon precept. Hear the great apostle of the Gentiles. Let every soul be subject to the higher powers : For there is no power but of God : the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, *resisteth the ordinance of God : and they that

* In any other manner, than the laws of the community direct. See Mr. Wesley's Notes : The primitive Christians appealed to those laws that were in their favour. St. Paul shewed them the example,

that resist shall receive to themselves (κέρμα,) condemnation. For Rulers (notwithstanding some exceptions,) are not a terror to good works, but to evil : wilt thou not then be afraid of the power ? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have (in general) praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he beareth not the sword in vain : For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay you tribute also ; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their due, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. I exhort, says the same Apostle, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men : for Kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable example, Acts xvi. 35—39. xxii. 25—29. But when there was no law to protect them, they submitted to suffer, for their Master did not allow them to resist *by force*.

life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.

Hear also what St. Peter teaches, submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King as supreme, or unto Governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. As servants of God, honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the King.

The ancient Church which learned of them was conspicuous for treading in their steps. The apologies for the Christian Religion, published by the Fathers, abound with declarations of reverence, and of their design chearfully to support the ruling powers. They challenged their enemies to prove that any Christian had opposed the magistrates, or had favoured sedition. They held all such proceedings in abhorrence, and regarded them as instances of rebellion against Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords : and they have herein left us an example to tread in their steps.

II. But

II. But while according to their divine Master's precept and example, they rendered to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, did they render to any creature the things which were God's? What these are our Lord has told us, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Did they consent to worship and serve him according to the will of man? No: they were all aware of this idolatry. They would have no other Gods before him. They knew that *before him* all were alike. They knew that kings, if they would worship God acceptably, must worship him with a pure conscience; and that to be governed therein by any hope or fear which has not him for its object, must be an obomination to him, who has commanded *all* his creatures to sanctify him in their heart, and to make him their fear and their dread: and that in vain they worship, whose fear towards him is taught by the precepts of men. He is equally the Lord of the King and the Peasant; and the word that he spake shall judge them both in that day. While therefore they honoured all men, they knew no man
after

after the flesh, but by manifestation of the truth, commended themselves to every man's conscience in the fear of God.

But it is a melancholy fact, that from the earliest ages, there have been Rulers of this world who have forgotten by whom they reigned, and have invaded his rights who in his providence placed them upon their Thrones. They have, in this respect, cherished an impious jealousy concerning the God of heaven and earth, who is the blessed and only Potentate. They were not satisfied with ruling in due subordination to him, but have invaded his rights, and arrogated to themselves that high prerogative of God, the government of conscience. Whenever this has been done, those who before obeyed in the fear of God, and set an example to the unthinking unstable multitude, have uniformly resisted unto blood rather than debase their consecrated hearts, or bow their knees to either dead or living idols. Thus when Nebuchadnezzar, in his pride, would convert the whole nation to the worship of his golden image, by means of the burning fiery furnace, *Shadrach, Meshach, and*
Abed-nego,

Abed-nego, three captive Jews, scorning the fervile example of nations, people, and languages, braved the wrath of the King, being determined to suffer rather than sin : while their faithful Lord (who afterward commanded to pay tribute to Cæsar,) honours their constancy, appears with them in the fire, and says in effect to their mighty persecutor, “ in as much as you did it to them, you did it unto me !”

Daniel, the man greatly beloved, is another shining example set before us. He rendered to the Cæsar of that day the things which were his ; insomuch that even his enemies confessed, “ We shall not be able to find any fault against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.” Yet these impious men dared to attack him in this sacred point. They procured a Decree forbidding all men to pray, except to the King, for thirty days, on pain of being cast into the den of lions : thus making him in effect the God of the land. The man of God determined to suffer, rather than worship man that shall die. His God bears witness to him ; and the savage beasts, constrained

constrained by divine power, reverence him as they did man before the fall. He is taken up with honour out of the den, and the name of the true God is through his constancy proclaimed throughout the eastern world.

The Apostles and primitive Christians trode in these shining footsteps. Their reverence of the Civil Power, was manifest to all. But when commanded by the Rulers not to preach the gospel, to worship idols, to transgress their divine Master's precepts, or omit any thing which he commanded them to do, we hear them with one voice asserting the sacred rights of conscience, and asking their impious persecutors, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye!" Their constancy herein triumphed over all opposition. The force of truth at length overcame the world, and the cross was established on the throne of the Cæsar's!

But how soon did the fine gold become dim, and the faithful city become an harlot, how soon did *Papal* Rome vie with *Heathen* Rome, and dare to dictate to the consciences

consciences of men both what they should believe and how they should worship? How soon was the word of God made void by the traditions of men, and a worldly religion established by the power of the sword! the Kings of the earth joined with *the man of sin*, and raised a carnal system, opposite to the spirituality and heavenly nature of the kingdom of Christ (and therefore called in scripture *Antichrist*,) while all who dared to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, were given up to torments and to death.

But it may be said, "Christianity is now reformed, according to the oracles of God." It is so in many places. But have the sacred rights of conscience been always maintained in Protestant Kingdoms? Have Sovereigns and Rulers, even in these, always taken care not to invade the prerogative of God? We cannot say this. It is a melancholy truth that even in our own land, since the reformation, despite has been done in this respect to the Spirit of grace. It may tend to increase our gratitude to the gracious Governor of the world, to take a short view of those melancholy

choly times, when Protestants revived the flames of persecution, and to contrast with them our present happy days of Christian liberty.

I would ask then what freedom with respect to the worship and service of God, did that zealous Protestant Queen Elizabeth allow ? Burning it is true was out of fashion in her days. But how many did she hang only for asserting their right to worship God according to their own conscience ? King James, her successor, did not proceed to such lengths ; but did he allow liberty of conscience ? By no means. During his whole reign, the Puritans were more or less persecuted. In the following reign, their sufferings were rather encreased than diminished. Many of them died in prison, and many more were reduced to the deepest poverty by fines, and prosecutions : 'till wearied out with this oppression, many of them fled for refuge to the wilds of America.

To shew the tyranny of the second Charles, it will be only needful to give an extract from two publick monuments, *the Act of Uniformity*, and *the Act against Conventicles*.

*Conventicles.** In the former it is enacted,
 “ That every Parson, Vicar, or Minister
 “ whatever, who has any benefice within
 “ these Realms, shall before the 24th of
 “ August next, openly and publickly de-
 “ clare, his unfeigned assent and consent
 “ to all and every thing contained in the
 “ book of common prayer, or shall ipso
 “ facto be deprived of all his benefices !
 “ Likewise if any Dean, Prebendary, Mas-
 “ ter, Fellow, Chaplain, or Tutor of any
 “ College, Hall, House of learning, or
 “ Hospital ; any publick Professor, or
 “ other person in holy Orders, any School-
 “ master, or Teacher, or Tutor in any
 “ private family, do not subscribe thereto,
 “ he shall ipso facto be deprived of all his
 “ places, and shall be utterly disabled from
 “ continuing therein !”

By this act thousands of men, guilty of no crime, were stript of all they had, and with their families turned out of house and home and reduced to little less than beggary, for no other fault real or pretended, but because they did not dare to render to Cæsar, or to man, the things

* See Mr. Welley's Thoughts on Liberty.

which

which were God's : to worship him according to other men's consciences ! but it did not rest here. It was further declared, that " if any of them acted in the before mentioned capacities, without having subscribed thereto, he should suffer three months imprisonment without bail or mainprize !"

By the act against Conventicles, if any person should assemble to worship God, except in the Churches of the establishment, they were first robbed of all their substance, and, if they persisted, of their liberty also : often of their lives. Such was the liberty of conscience that Englishmen enjoyed during the reign of the *Stuarts* ! Can we wonder therefore that the Lord permitted their total overthrow by the Revolution of 1688 ?

But does any man in this nation now suffer any thing like this ? Does our present King (or did any of that family) persecute any man for his religion ? Has not every man in this nation a legal, as well as a natural right, to worship God according to his own conscience ? Look round you and see how religious communities of every

every description sit under their own vine and fig-tree, none making them afraid ! compare the former days with those that are now, and you will say, “ The lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage.”

Let us then be grateful for the blessings we enjoy. Let us fear God, and honour the King. Let us be steadfast and unmoveable herein. Let us render to all their due ; but to our God, who loved us, and has bought us with his blood, let us render our heart and our life. Let us pray that our peace, and ability to receive and do good, may be continued to us. But should the heavens again grow black with the clouds of persecution : should *infidelity* in its zeal against *superstition*, blaspheme the Holy Name whereby ye are called, and vilify that religion which is of God, and which breathes peace and good will to men : or should Papal tyranny again rear its head, and strive to prop its worldly system by the old weapons of force or fraud :—Call to mind the former days. Suffer not as evil-doers ; but if you suffer for well-doing, for rendering to God the things

things which are God's, wonder not as though some strange thing happened unto you. Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. Take unto you his whole armour, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand before him with joy, who

“Rides in the Whirlwind, and directs the Storm.”

Remember, the Government is upon his shoulder, and that the fierceness of man shall turn to his praise. Men who fear not God, may think they do mankind service when they tear the outward Church to pieces. But the CHURCH OF CHRIST is built upon a Rock, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. If indeed ye are members of it, let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Let it be seen, amidst the crash of worldly systems, that there are those in the world, who fearing the Lord, and rendering to all their due, are as Mount Sion, which cannot be moved, but standeth fast for ever.

F I N I S.



